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THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND RELATED MATTERS

QUESTION OF CYPRUS

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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS

IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

Letter dated 14 November 1995 from the Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the communiqué of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 10 to 13 November 1995, and the associated statement on Nigeria and commonwealth action programmes.

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I should be grateful if you would have these documents circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 28, 29, 47, 55, 65, 67, 70, 96, 107, 112, 117 and 146, among others.

(Signed) Colin KEATING
Permanent Representative

Annex I

COMMUNIQUÉ

Introduction

1. Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Auckland, New Zealand, from 10-13 November 1995. Of the 48 countries which attended the Meeting, 33 were represented by Heads of State or Prime Ministers. The Meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Rt. Hon. James Bolger.

2. Heads of Government commenced their deliberations with a message of felicitations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth.

3. Heads of Government noted with particular pleasure the return of South Africa to the Commonwealth in June 1994 and accorded a special welcome to President Nelson Mandela. They welcomed Cameroon, represented by President Paul Biya, as the Commonwealth's 52nd member.

4. Heads of Government expressed their deep appreciation for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to them in New Zealand, for the excellent organisational arrangements made for the meeting and for the outstanding manner in which the Chairman had guided the deliberations.

Global Review

5. Heads of Government reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental values set out in their Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991. They stressed that democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms were interdependent and mutually reinforcing. They requested the Secretariat to assist member governments to promote greater awareness, education and training in human rights and to continue to support governmental efforts for the promotion of democracy, good governance, sustainable development, alleviation of poverty and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, in an integrated and mutually reinforcing manner.

6. Heads of Government reaffirmed that women's rights were human rights and urged member governments to adopt legislation and develop national strategies to promote the advancement of women in accordance with the strategic objectives, actions and priorities adopted by the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing. In particular, they endorsed the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and encouraged governments to implement its recommendations. They also urged ratification and implementation of the human rights covenants and other international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

7. Heads of Government reiterated their commitment to pay special attention to the rights and needs of children and to the importance of protecting and promoting their rights and needs. They called on all states to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8. Heads of Government expressed satisfaction at the transitions from military or one-party rule to representative forms of government which several member states had successfully achieved in recent years and urged that member countries, the Secretariat, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other relevant Commonwealth organisations should continue to extend all possible support to these countries to consolidate and strengthen democratic processes and institutions.

9. Heads of Government adopted the Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme on the Harare Declaration.

10. In response to developments in Nigeria which constituted a serious violation of the principles set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, Commonwealth Heads of Government, with the exception of The Gambia, agreed to suspend Nigeria from membership of the Commonwealth pending the return to compliance with the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. They urged the Nigerian Government to take immediate and concrete steps to adhere to these principles, and offered whatever practical assistance the Government might request in this respect. They called for the release of the 43 prisoners currently being held for involvement in an alleged coup attempt and the release of Chief Abiola. They further decided that if no demonstrable progress was made towards the fulfilment of these conditions within a time frame to be stipulated, Nigeria would be expelled from the association.

11. Heads of Government welcomed the reaffirmation of the programme of transition to democracy in Sierra Leone and the fact that elections were to be held in the country early in 1996. In this context, they underscored the importance of peace and reconciliation to this process and noted with satisfaction the assistance which the Commonwealth, bilaterally and multilaterally, was providing in this regard.

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12. Heads of Government noted the affirmation by the Government of The Gambia of its plan to hold national elections by July 1996 and offered Commonwealth assistance in the implementation of the transition programme drawn up by the Gambian authorities in order to facilitate a successful restoration of democracy.

13. Heads of Government attached special importance to the fact that their Meeting was being held in the 50th anniversary year of the United Nations and recalled that many of them had participated in the Special Commemorative Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly and subscribed to the Declaration adopted by it. They reaffirmed their support for the United Nations as a vital instrument of multilateral co-operation and as the primary forum responsible for the maintenance of peace, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the promotion of development, equality and justice. While acknowledging the organisation's accomplishments over the first 50 years, they reaffirmed their conviction that only complete commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter could ensure the effectiveness of the organisation.

14. Heads of Government agreed that it was essential that the United Nations be reformed and revitalised. They underscored the need to improve the efficiency of the organisation by ensuring a clearer and complementary role for all UN organs, bodies and agencies, reducing duplication and waste and encouraging better management, transparency and accountability. They agreed that work on the revitalisation of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should continue and noted the current examination by the General Assembly of the role of the Trusteeship Council. They welcomed the call in the 50th Anniversary Declaration for reform and expansion of the Security Council and called for further in-depth consideration by member states of the United Nations, in order to resolve the key issues on which important differences remain.

15. Heads of Government considered that the United Nations financial crisis required urgent attention, and urged all member states of the United Nations to meet their obligations in full and on time, and without conditions.

16. Heads of Government agreed that the Commonwealth should continue to support and complement the work of the United Nations. The Commonwealth's strengths were particularly relevant in a world increasingly characterised by intra-state instability and strife stemming from such divisive forces as ethnic and religious intolerance. They commended, in this context, the efforts of the Commonwealth Secretary-General to foster peace and stability in Commonwealth member countries, at the request of governments concerned, through use of good offices and the promotion of sustainable development and fundamental political values. They recognised the Commonwealth's capacity for conflict prevention and resolution and welcomed the recommendations made in the Report of the Intergovernmental Group on the Emergence of a Global Humanitarian Order, entitled "Towards a More Humane World". They requested the Secretary-General to take follow-up measures as appropriate, in consultation with member governments.

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17. Heads of Government noted that changes in international circumstances and changing world opinion had provided an impetus for further practical measures to enhance global stability. They expressed their support for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation at the global and regional levels.

18. Heads of Government emphasised the importance of the determined pursuit by the nuclear weapon states of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating those weapons, and by all states of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. They noted that these were among the commitments reaffirmed by the states party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was extended indefinitely at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

19. Heads of Government expressed concern at the threat to security posed by other weapons of mass destruction as well as the build-up of conventional weapons beyond the legitimate requirements of self-defence. They urged ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention at the earliest possible date to enable it to enter into force without delay. They reiterated their call for the strengthening of the provisions of the Biological Weapons Convention. Heads of Government called for greater attention to be paid to the problem of the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines and encouraged states party to the Inhumane Weapons Convention to work constructively towards reaching agreed controls on these weapons.

20. Heads of Government welcomed the decision by Britain, France and the United States of America to sign the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga establishing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. They also welcomed the adoption by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) of the Pelindaba Treaty on the establishment of an African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. They expressed the hope that the nuclear weapon states would be able to accede to the relevant Protocols to the Treaty to ensure its success. They noted with satisfaction the advances made by member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) towards the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in South East Asia. They also expressed support for the establishment of other nuclear free zones based upon arrangements freely arrived at by all the states in the region concerned.

21. Heads of Government noted the widespread anger caused by the current programmes of nuclear weapon tests. The overwhelming majority of Heads of Government condemned this continued nuclear testing which was inconsistent with the undertaking given by the nuclear weapon states to exercise utmost restraint so as not to affect the ongoing negotiations for the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996. These Heads of Government urged the immediate cessation of such testing.

22. Heads of Government emphasised the urgency of completing the negotiations for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996. They stressed the importance they attached to a treaty banning any nuclear weapon test explosion and any other nuclear explosion. They considered the conclusion of this agreement to be of the highest importance for the international community as a major step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and efforts for global nuclear disarmament, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

23. Recalling their Cyprus Communiqué, Heads of Government once again expressed support for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus. They urged the Security Council to take resolute action and the necessary measures for the speedy implementation of all United Nations resolutions on Cyprus, in particular Security Council Resolutions 365 (1974), 550 (1984) and 939 (1994). They expressed full support for the proposal by the President of Cyprus for the demilitarisation of Cyprus. They called for the speedy withdrawal of all Turkish forces and settlers from the Republic of Cyprus, the return of the refugees to their homes in conditions of safety, restoration of and respect for the human rights of all Cypriots, and the accounting of all missing persons, and expressed grave concern at the continuing influx of settlers. Expressing deep disappointment at the continued lack of progress in achieving a solution, due to the lack of political will on the Turkish Cypriot side, they reaffirmed support for the United Nations Secretary-General's efforts to find a just and workable solution. In this context they agreed that the Commonwealth Action Group on Cyprus should continue to monitor developments and facilitate the United Nations Secretary-General's efforts as appropriate.

24. Heads of Government reaffirmed their strong support for the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Belize, encouraging continued expressions of individual and collective solidarity with Belize. They noted with satisfaction the consultations occurring between Guatemala and Belize with respect to the implementation of confidence building measures, and encouraged both parties to continue and successfully conclude their dialogue. Heads of Government reiterated the request to the Secretary-General to convene the Commonwealth Ministerial Committee on Belize whenever necessary.

25. Heads of Government warmly recalled Hong Kong's long and close links with the Commonwealth, acknowledging the importance of the territory to the economic vitality of the Asia-Pacific region and to world prosperity. They expressed confidence that Hong Kong's success would continue beyond the change of sovereignty in 1997, in accordance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration which provides, *inter alia*, for the rule of law and a high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong. In this context, they hope to see during the transition intensified Sino-British co-operation in the interests of Hong Kong.

26. Heads of Government strongly condemned the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the commission of ethnic cleansing, mass murder, aggression, rape and other gross violations of human rights and

humanitarian law. They expressed the hope that peace talks currently underway in Dayton, USA, would result in bringing an early end to the sufferings experienced in recent years by the people in the Balkans. They called on all the parties to negotiate the prevention of a return to hostilities, including in Eastern Slavonia in Croatia. They emphasised the need for a just, equitable and comprehensive political settlement for Bosnia-Herzegovina which provides for free, fair and democratic elections and which ensures its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and the status of Sarajevo as a single, undivided city under the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They also stressed the importance of international assistance in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country and that pending the settlement of the conflict, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina should have the inherent right of self-defence. The international community should ensure the follow-up to the work of the International War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague.

27. Heads of Government condemned the tragic assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel. They expressed the hope that this would not adversely affect the peace process in the Middle East, which had their full support.

28. Heads of Government noted the determination of the Mediterranean countries to pursue initiatives and to adopt effective measures to strengthen security and co-operation in the region, and they considered that the Euro-Mediterranean Conference to be held in Barcelona in November 1995 would make a significant contribution in this regard.

29. Heads of Government reaffirmed their strongest condemnation of acts of terrorism in all forms, including the taking of hostages, as aimed at the destruction of human rights, and as one of the most dangerous and pernicious threats which destabilises the political, economic and social order of sovereign states. They reiterated their determination to combat terrorism, whether perpetrated by individuals, groups or states, by every means possible, including the development of a comprehensive legal framework of conventions.

30. Heads of Government were encouraged by the strong performance of much of the world economy in recent years but recognised that this improved performance was not shared by several least developed countries and particularly small states which are vulnerable to natural disasters and external shocks. They stressed the importance of persisting with sound macro-economic and structural policies to sustain the momentum of growth with social justice.

31. Heads of Government expressed the hope that the expansion of world trade will continue to flow from the full implementation of the Uruguay Round Agreements. They acknowledged the need to take account of the fact that some Commonwealth countries, especially the net food importing countries and those benefiting from preferential access to industrial country markets, face transitional problems in adjusting to the new global trade regime and may need assistance to meet these challenges. Heads of Government emphasised the need to ensure that

new forms of protectionism are not introduced in the guise, *inter alia*, of environmental and labour standards.

32. Heads of Government endorsed the conclusions on debt reached by Commonwealth Finance Ministers at their 1995 meeting in Jamaica. In particular, they welcomed the agreement last year on the Naples terms for official bilateral debt and called on Paris Club members to implement them fully. They also called for full implementation of the Trinidad proposals, including 80 per cent relief for the most needy.

33. Heads of Government welcomed the multilateral debt initiative proposed by the British Government at the 1994 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Malta and elaborated at the 1995 meeting in Jamaica. In the light of this initiative, they called on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to develop constructive proposals for addressing the multilateral debt problem in a comprehensive way, making full use of their available resources to finance a solution. They recognised that any proposal for financing debt reduction should take account of the need to avoid adverse implications for countries which have continued to service their debt regularly. Heads of Government considered that the Commonwealth could make a significant contribution to the debate on debt, both between debtor and creditor countries and within the international financial institutions themselves. They also recognised the concerns expressed by some heavily indebted lower middle income countries.

34. Heads of Government expressed concern at the erosion of support in some countries for official development assistance and urged donors to use their best endeavours to secure substantial flows of funds, bearing in mind the special needs of the least developed countries and small island states, and to improve the quality of their assistance. They called for IDA-10 pledges to be honoured in full and for IDA-11 to take account of new claimants and expanded development agenda.

35. Heads of Government endorsed the launching of the Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative (CPII) as a commercial venture to mobilise capital for long-term investments in expanding privatised or privatising companies and in small and medium sized private sector business, initially in Africa. They encouraged interested investment agencies and institutions in Commonwealth countries to invest in CPII. They considered that the initiative should be extended at the earliest opportunity to other regions within the Commonwealth.

36. Heads of Government supported the need to continue the examination of reform of the international financial institutions and United Nations development agencies to reduce duplication and enhance their coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. Recognising the need for the Commonwealth to contribute to this process, they asked Commonwealth Finance Ministers to review progress at their next meeting.

37. Heads of Government took note of the views of the ministerial-level Commonwealth Consultative Group on Environment and encouraged Ministers to continue their periodic reviews of Commonwealth co-operation on environmental issues. They agreed that forestry was an area in which the Commonwealth could make a distinctive contribution.

38. Heads of Government welcomed the signature of the agreement between the President of Guyana and the Commonwealth Secretary-General launching the unique Iwokrama Rain Forest Programme in Guyana as the basis of a Commonwealth network for the conservation and development of tropical forests. They looked forward to the early establishment of a donor support group.

39. Heads of Government endorsed the Special Report by Finance Ministers on money laundering and asked Finance Ministers to review progress on the implementation of the Report's recommendations and to report to CHOGM in 1997. They also asked Law Ministers to review progress on the implementation of other measures to combat money laundering, and similarly to report to CHOGM. They noted the nefarious links between drug trafficking, commercial crime and money laundering and agreed that strong political commitment and stringent legislative and administrative measures were required for the problem to be effectively tackled.

Small States

40. Heads of Government welcomed the Report of the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group on Small States, which met on the eve of CHOGM, covering such issues as sustainable development, the implications of adjusting to the new international trading system, and security concerns. They acknowledged the importance of a forum to address the concerns of small states and noted the priorities identified by small states in these areas and the recommendations contained in the Report and called for follow-up action as necessary.

Commonwealth Functional Co-operation

41. Heads of Government considered various aspects of Commonwealth functional co-operation, which they reaffirmed as crucial to conferring the benefits of membership on member states and, in this context, strongly endorsed the attached Report of the Committee of the Whole. They urged that the Secretariat's efforts be intensified to establish priorities in these areas, based on the Commonwealth's comparative advantage.

Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation

42. Heads of Government recognised the important role played by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation in supporting the social and economic development of member countries, in the priority areas identified in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. They recognised the resource constraints facing the CFTC and agreed, within the means of each country, to consider increasing the flow of resources to the Fund.

Public Service Reform and Good Government

43. Heads of Government endorsed the Secretary-General's initiative 'Towards a New Public Administration' aimed at assisting member countries in their efforts to improve the performance of their public services. They also welcomed the establishment of the Commonwealth Good Government Programme by New Zealand, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the Commonwealth Association of Public Administration and Management and the Commonwealth Network on Information Technology.

Commonwealth Sport

44. Heads of Government recognised the important role of sport in promoting human resource development. Acknowledging the valuable contribution of the CHOGM Committee on Co-operation through Sport, Heads of Government extended the mandate of the Committee for a further four-year term.

Commonwealth Foundation

45. Heads of Government welcomed the Report of the Commonwealth Foundation and strongly commended the Report of the Second NGO Forum and the document: 'Non-Governmental Organisations: Guidelines for Good Policy and Practice'. They expressed support to the Foundation and urged member governments to take all possible action, including settlement of arrears, to alleviate the difficult financial situation confronting the Foundation.

Commonwealth of Learning

46. Heads of Government welcomed the Report of the Board of Governors of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and acknowledged the valuable role played by COL. Expressing concern at the financial crisis facing COL, they urged governments to take all possible steps to provide greater resources to the organisation at the earliest opportunity.

Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management

47. Heads of Government welcomed the establishment of the Commonwealth Partnership for Technology Management as an innovative joint venture between governments and the private sector and urged both to contribute to it.

Membership

48. Heads of Government requested the Secretary-General to establish an intergovernmental group to examine and advise on the criteria for assessing future applications for membership of the Commonwealth. In the meantime, they decided, as an exceptional case, to accept the application by Mozambique for membership and therefore to warmly welcome that country as the 53rd member of the association.

Venue of 1997 Meeting

49. Heads of Government accepted with great pleasure the offer of the British Government to host their next Meeting in 1997.

50. Heads of Government thanked the Secretariat for the work it had done since their Cyprus Meeting and, in particular, commended the Secretary-General for the leadership he had continued to provide in the affairs of the Commonwealth.

Annex II

Statement on Nigeria made by Commonwealth Heads of Government at their Retreat at Millbrook, Queenstown

The following statement was released at Millbrook in Queenstown, New Zealand, today by the Rt Hon Jim Bolger, Prime Minister of New Zealand and Chairman of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting:

> In response to developments in Nigeria which have constituted a serious violation of the principles set out in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, Commonwealth Heads of Government, with the exception of The Gambia and Solomon Islands, agreed to suspend Nigeria from membership of the Commonwealth pending the return to compliance with the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. They urged the Nigerian Government to take immediate and concrete steps to adhere to these principles, and offered whatever practical assistance the Government might request in this respect. They called for the release of the 43 prisoners currently being held for involvement in an alleged coup attempt and the release of Chief Abiola. They further decided that if no demonstrable progress was made towards the fulfilment of these conditions within a time frame to be stipulated, Nigeria would be expelled from the association.

A Commonwealth spokesman announced in Millbrook later that the Solomon Islands had withdrawn its opposition to the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth and had joined fellow members in supporting the statement issued by Mr Jim Bolger.

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Annex III

THE MILLBROOK COMMONWEALTH ACTION PROGRAMME ON THE HARARE COMMONWEALTH DECLARATION

At Harare in 1991, we pledged to work for the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the association, namely democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, fundamental human rights, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, and just and honest government. We agreed at the same time to work for the promotion of socio-economic development, recognising its high priority for most Commonwealth countries. During our Retreat at Millbrook, we decided to adopt a Commonwealth Action Programme to fulfil more effectively the commitments contained in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. This Programme is in three parts:

(i) advancing Commonwealth fundamental political values;
(ii) promoting sustainable development; and
(iii) facilitating consensus building.

I. ADVANCING COMMONWEALTH FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL VALUES

A. Measures in Support of Processes and Institutions for the Practice of Harare Principles

2. The Secretariat should enhance its capacity to provide advice, training and other forms of technical assistance to governments in promoting the Commonwealth's fundamental political values, including:

- assistance in creating and building the capacity of requisite institutions;
- assistance in constitutional and legal matters, including with selecting models and initiating programmes of democratisation;
- assistance in the electoral field, including the establishment or strengthening of independent electoral machinery, civic and voter education, the preparation of Codes of Conduct, and assistance with voter registration;
- observation of elections, including by-elections or local elections where appropriate, at the request of the member governments concerned.

- strengthening the rule of law and promoting the independence of the judiciary through the promotion of exchanges among, and training of, the judiciary;

- assistance in providing the necessary administrative support for good governance, particularly in the area of public service reform, and

- other activities, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and other bodies, to strengthen the democratic culture and effective parliamentary practices.

B. Measures in Response to Violations of Harare Principles

3. Where a member country is perceived to be clearly in violation of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration, and particularly in the event of an unconstitutional overthrow of a democratically elected government, appropriate steps should be taken to express the collective concern of Commonwealth countries and to encourage the restoration of democracy within a reasonable time frame. These include:

(i) immediate public expression by the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth's collective disapproval of any such infringement of the Harare principles;

(ii) early contact by the Secretary-General with the de facto government followed by continued good offices and appropriate technical assistance to facilitate an early restoration of democracy;

(iii) encouraging bilateral demarches by member countries, especially those within the region, both to express disapproval and to support early restoration of democracy;

(iv) appointment of an envoy or a group of eminent Commonwealth representatives where, following the Secretary-General's contacts with the authorities concerned, such a mission would be beneficial in reinforcing the Commonwealth's good offices role;

(v) stipulation of up to two years as the time frame for the restoration of democracy where the institutions are not in place to permit the holding of elections within, say, a maximum of six months;

(vi) pending restoration of democracy, exclusion of the government concerned from participation at ministerial-level meetings of the Commonwealth, including CHOGM;

(vii) suspension of participation at all Commonwealth meetings and of Commonwealth technical assistance if acceptable progress is not recorded by the government concerned after a period of two years; and

(viii) consideration of appropriate further bilateral and multilateral measures by all member states (e.g. limitation of government-to-government contacts; people-to-people measures; trade restrictions; and, in exceptional cases, suspension from the association) to reinforce the need for change in the event that the government concerned chooses to leave the Commonwealth and/or persists in violating the principles of the Harare Commonwealth Declaration even after two years.

C. Mechanism for Implementation of Measures

4. We have decided to establish a Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group on the Harare Commonwealth Declaration in order to deal with serious or persistent violations of the principles contained in that Declaration. The Group will be convened by the Secretary-General and will comprise the Foreign Ministers of eight countries, supplemented as appropriate by one or two additional ministerial representatives from the region concerned. It will be the Group's task to assess the nature of the infringement and recommend measures for collective Commonwealth action aimed at the speedy restoration of democracy and constitutional rule.

5. The composition, terms of reference and operation of the Group will be reviewed by us every two years.

II. PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

6. We reaffirmed our view that the Commonwealth should continue to be a source of help in promoting development and literacy and in eradicating poverty, particularly as these bear on women and children. With a view to enhancing its capacity in this area, we agreed on the following steps:

(i) to strengthen the Secretariat's capacity for undertaking developmental work through support for its various Funds and especially by restoring the resources of the CFTC to their 1991/92 level in real terms; and to provide adequate resources to the Commonwealth of Learning and to the Commonwealth Foundation;

(ii) to support a greater flow of investment to developing member countries through such schemes as the Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative;

(iii) to work for continued progress in assisting countries with unsustainable debt burdens and to promote enhanced multilateral concessional financial flows to developing countries; in particular, to support new and innovative mechanisms for relief on multilateral debt, such as the one proposed by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer at the 1994 Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Malta, and reiterated subsequently;

(iv) to support the Secretariat in facilitating the adoption by more Commonwealth countries of successful self-help schemes, with non-governmental agencies and others acting as catalytic agents, for mobilising the energies of people in alleviating poverty;

(v) to support the efforts of small island developing states to mitigate the effects on their development of environmental change, natural disasters and the changing international trading system; and

(vi) to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, which threatens large parts of the younger population of many countries, recognising that the effective exploitation of economic opportunities requires a healthy and educated population; and to provide further resources to renew the core funding of the Southern Africa Network of AIDS Organisations (SANASO), along with increased funding for UNICEF initiatives in Southern Africa.

III. FACILITATING CONSENSUS BUILDING

7. We were convinced that the Commonwealth, with its global reach and unique experience of consensus building, was in a position to assist the wider international community in building bridges across traditional international divides of opinion on particular issues. We therefore agreed that there was scope for the association to play a greater role in the search for consensus on global issues, through:

(i) use of their governments' membership of various regional organisations and attendance at other international gatherings to advance consensual positions agreed within the Commonwealth;

(ii) use where appropriate of special missions to advance Commonwealth consensual positions and promote wider consensus on issues of major international concern; and

(iii) use of formal and informal Commonwealth consultations in the wings of meetings of international institutions with a view to achieving consensus on major concerns.